

Date: May 17, 1983

Place: 610 Emerson, Evanston, ILL, interviewees' home

Interview with: Charles "Doc" and Helen Glass

Interviewed by: Greh. Maddox

Comments: Both were very cooperative. They offered to help set up interviews with others.

Q. When did you or your families first come to Evanston?

Mrs. G. My grandfather, Joseph C. Ivester, came here before 1900. Our family was about the fifth black family in Evanston. Henry Butler and his family was the first. They started the first taxi service in Evanston and wound up owning much of the town.

Q. Where did your grandfather come from?

Mrs. G. He came from Anderson, South Carolina, near Abbeville. His father was an Indian. They lived at 329 Dempster, where my mother was born. I was born next door.

Q. Do you remember what living there was like?

Mrs. G. It was a very mixed neighborhood. Like I said, my family was about the fifth black family in the town. The Butlers, the Twiggs, and maybe the Harrissons were here before. Up until World War II blacks could live anywhere in Evanston. Things began to change when more blacks came to the town and they began to assert themselves. The two blocks on Brown from Emerson down were very mixed. We lived next door to an Italian family, Charles Leggio, a plumber. We all did work for each other, and all the kids played together. There was a candy store owned by the Mighty Sellers (?) that we all went to. There were Germans, Armenians, and Italians around. The neighborhood was a real melting pot in the 1920's.

Q. Did you go to school in Evanston?

Mrs. G. We both went to ETHS. I went to Nichols Schools.

Q. When did your family come here Mr. Glass?

Mr. G. We came in the early 1920's from Atlanta. I was very young so I don't remember anything about Atlanta. My father was a laborer.

Q. Was he in construction?

Mr. G. Back then it wasn't really "construction." He was just a laborer. He helped build Dyche Stadium. He died young.

Q. You went to high school here?

Mr. G. Yes. I finished high school in 1935. I worked for the WPA for \$55 a month. I eventually worked as a time-keeper there. In the late 1930's I was hired by the Illinois Arts and Crafts project. I had taken drafting courses in high school, so I drew maps for the military. All during the war I worked there, and after the war, my boss wanted me to come to Washington to work for the government. I would've gone, but another man at the city offered me a job there. When the war ended, he told me to come down to city hall and apply but when I got there, he said that he had two men coming back from the war who had worked there before, and he had to give them back their jobs.

Q. So what did you do?

Mr. G. Well, I went to work for Washington National Life. I worked in shipping and receiving. I got several people jobs, including Don Edens, my brother in law. He's a big shot there now. I also worked with Delbert Alexander on

on-his bowling machines. I went with him to Grand Rapids when they thought they could make it there. The company wound up losing about a quater of a million dollars on his machines. (Note: See interview with Delbert Alexander).

Q. So you worked with Delbert? What was he like?

Mr. G. Debert was OK. I went to Wales with him when he and his son tried to get his baseball machine built there. It was the funniest thing; these people didn't know the first thing about baseball, and they were trying to build machines to play baseball. Debert used to fix games for carnivals and things. He used to set up gambling games.

Q. This was in the fifties?

Mr. G. Yes. I went to work for the city at the police station in 1950. I worked evenings.

Q. When did you start working with Northwestern athletics?

Mr. G. I started in 1957. I was at the Big Ten track meet, and Wilmer Fowler won the 1000 and 220 yard dashes. Nobody came to congratulate him except the other guys in the races. So I went down and introduced myself. Well, I sort of opened my house to the black athletes at NU. Eventually, I became part of the recruiting system here. Alex Agase called me the most important black man in Evanston. They had a dinner for me last weekend. Nobody could stand up in front of that crowd and see what I saw. Ron Burton said that Mrs. G. and I were the only family we had left. Irv Cross was there, and Daryl Stipanich, Phil Collins. Mike Adamle sent a letter. Ara Parsegian sent a note. It made me proud to see all those people and all they had become.

Q. To get back to you Mrs. G. What did you do after you finished school?

Mrs. G. I got married. No, I graduated in 1935. I went to work first as a key punch operator and then I went to airline reservation school. Eventually, I worked at the Winnetka city hall until I retired a few years ago. I retired early. because I didn't want to wait until Reagan did away with Social Security. I was always good with numbers, so I learned how to work a computer after I was 45. I worked in the city utility office with Lee Ellis, the city manager. Now I work over at the Levy Center; I really enjoy that. I remember one time I applied for a job in an office. The application asked about race, so I put calico. The man taking the application asked me what I thought I was doing. I told him that my great-grandfather was white, so you tell me what to put down. He offered me a job in the Kitchen, and I turned him down. Later he called me and asked where I got the nerve turning down his job. I just laughed.

Q. Speaking of parents, what did your parents and grand-parents do?

Mrs. G. My grandfather drove a cab for the Butler's. He was the son of an Irish overseer and a slave, Anna. They had two children, a boy and a girl. We don't know what happened to the girl. One time, my parents went back and saw the man. My mother said he was a real slob. Of course, he

didn't recognize the children. My grandfather eventually got a fifty dollar gold piece from the Butlers as an award for the work he did. My father was a butler at the Evanston Club. Later on, he worked at Woolworth's. My mother was a beautician, but she died young.

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Mrs. G. No, not really, I've been fairly happy with my life. I regret I never went to college, but I've raised three good children who went to college.

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